

Wheels and Heels – November 2003

Email news from MoDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator Caryn Giarratano

Greetings, Windbenders!

Lance Armstrong spoke at Rolla Nov. 5, and **I met him!** I have a photo of him and me together, and he signed my copy of his new book, *Every Second Counts*. I was so pumped that I couldn't focus on reality for **days!** Thanks to organizer Dick Elgin and photographer Bob Phelan for making my dream come true.

Earlier this month, I reviewed two draft AASHTO books, the *Guide to Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities* and the *Guide for Park and Ride Facilities*. These are both new publications that will provide guidance for pedestrian accommodations. The creation of standards for pedestrian facilities will do more for elevating the awareness of those who design and build transportation facilities than anything else short of major legislation. I recommended acceptance for both publications. Although, I did recommend that the minimum sidewalk width be increased to five feet. I have PDF copies of both documents that I can share, but the files are **huge**.

I have been seeking answers to the liability and maintenance concerns of building sidewalks along state roads. The folks at the National Center for Bicycling and Walking have graciously offered to collect best practices across the nation regarding policy and legislation on these issues.

Last month I collected responses from BPAC members, MoDOT district staff and other state BP coordinators regarding a draft state pedestrian policy. The two most frequent comments concerned the definitions of *feasible* and *urbanized*. Responses indicated a need for safety and connectivity, enough time for peds to walk across intersections, the need to install signs to educate motorists to yield to peds in crosswalks, the need to accommodate peds in rural areas as well as urban areas and who should maintain sidewalks. I plan to rewrite the draft pedestrian policy to include the collected suggestions and the information from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking. I also plan to incorporate any applicable guidelines from the AASHTO Ped Guides. I'm still strolling on this project, but I hope to take it to a trot soon!

The Office of Highway Safety personnel and I have been working together to create or identify appropriate BP safety materials. Transportation Planning is conducting research to determine the root causes of BP and motorist crashes. I will share these analyses with BPAC to assist in defining the target audience and message for our safety campaign. Once we have determined who we are targeting and our message(s), I will coordinate with other MoDOT staff to develop the appropriate method(s) of effecting behavior changes to make walking and biking safer in Missouri.

In addition, I hope to collect information regarding bicycle crashes not involving a motorized vehicle. A Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville engineering student, Vijaysimha Seelam (vseelam@siue.edu) is collecting statistics on this type of accident. The study results may benefit MoDOT by providing data useful in determining a target message/audience to provide safer bicycle transportation. Please contact him to request an electronic survey form.

The Missouri Bicycle Federation (see www.mobikefed.org) is in the process of drafting and filing legislation to promote BP safety.

I had a lot of fun presenting a short BP talk to K-5 graders at Grant Elementary in Columbia on the October 8th Walk to School Day. My three-minute speech focused on five 2' x 3' posters to convey the messages: follow the rules of the road, share the road safely, pedestrians walk on the left, bicyclists ride on the right, wear bright, reflective clothing when close to motorized traffic, wear a helmet correctly when riding, look

both ways before crossing the street and walk in crosswalks. As I bubbled through my talk, I dressed in a reflective vest, helmet, gloves and sunglasses. My closing comment was, "Being safe is cool."

The MoDOT webmaster and I have been revising the BP pages. While we are moving forward to improve this site, a map depicting shoulder widths cannot be included at this time. MoDOT has not consistently collected shoulder data. This leads to problems identifying areas where bicyclists are able to use the shoulders because the surface conditions may have changed over time. We are exploring how to find time/staff to fix this problem, but since MoDOT staff has restrictions on hiring, it is unlikely this issue will be resolved soon.

The four-state regional conference, "Connecting Communities Through Better Design," will be held March 18-20, 2004, in Overland Park, KS, for planners, engineers and advocates. The keynote speaker will be Andy Clarke, a national BP expert. Sessions include on-road facility design by Bruce Landis (who created a national pedestrian LOS model) and a Rail-Trail development session by Ross Greathouse and folks from DNR. Other sessions include: accessibility, retrofit challenges, developing community bike/ped plans and safe routes to schools programs. The conference web site is <http://www.kutc.ku.edu/region7bikeped>.

The NHI Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design classes for MoDOT planners and engineers last month commanded rave reviews. The main presenter was Bruce Landis who has also been asked to present at the conference in March (mentioned above). I was excited to learn about designs focusing on pedestrian safety while also accommodating vehicles. My favorite was the design of bulb outs at intersections to decrease turning radii to calm traffic plus shortening the required walking distance for those wanting to cross the street.

Jefferson City is moving towards the formation of a local walking group. I was delighted to discover that Jefferson City has two sanctioned Volksmarch trails named Riverview Path and Lincoln University Path. Both are 10 km in length and start from the Hotel DeVille at Highway 50 and Broadway. If you know of any others, please let me know. I am often asked about biking or walking trails by those planning to vacation in Missouri.

Burlington North Santa Fe Railroad has published criteria for BP accommodations in its right-of-way. These guidelines explain liability, planning process and design requirements for the construction of multi-use paths that cross, are adjacent to or use this railroad property. For additional information or questions, contact Lyn Hartley, public projects director at lyn.hartley@bnsf.com.

Both Cape Girardeau and St. Louis will hold their new bridge dedication ceremonies Dec. 13. Running, walking and biking events will be included. For more information about the Cape ceremony, contact Steve Girard with Velo Bicycle Club at 573-335-7366 or Terry McDowell with Cape Roadrunners at 573-334-0587. For more information about the St. Louis event, contact Larry Welty with MoDOT District 6 at 314-340-4116.

Please forward this newsletter to anyone you feel may be interested. If you are not on the mailing list and would like to be added, please email me your address information.

Tailwinds, Caryn

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